DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 111 SP 035 439

AUTHOR	Shartrand, Angela; And Others
TITLE	Preparing Teachers To Involve Parents: A National Survey of Teacher Education Programs.
INSTITUTION	Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, MA.
PUB DATE	Aug 94
NOTE	37p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications Department, Harvard Family Research Project, Longfellow Hall, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Early Childhood Education; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Models; National Surveys; *Parent Participation; Parent Role; *Parent School Relationship; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Partnerships in Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *State Standards; *Teacher Certification; *Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

As recent trends in education reform and research stress the importance of school-home partnerships, teachers will need preparation for working successfully with parents and other family members. This paper examines teacher preparation in parent involvement for early childhood and K-12 teachers. Surveys of state certification requirements and preservice teacher education programs were conducted to describe the content of parent involvement requirements and training opportunities. Findings show that a majority of states do not mention parent involvement in teacher certification requirements. States with requirements often define parent involvement in vague terms. Likewise, most teacher education programs do not offer substantial parent involvement training. Training that exists is often traditional in definition, teaching methods, and delivery. A typology specifying different components of parent involvement training is also presented. Model programs teaching multiple types of parent involvement and utilizing collaboration and other innovative approaches are described. Recommendations for improving teacher preparation in parent involvement are offered. (Contains approximately 60 references.) (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SP

ED 374 111

Preparing Teachers to Involve Parents:

A National Survey of Teacher Education Programs

A Working Paper From

Harvard Family Research Project
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Angela Shartrand

Holly Kreider

Marji Erickson-Warfield

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A Shartrand

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

August 1994

SP035439

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For additional publications by Harvard Family Research Project contact:

Publications Department
Harvard Family Research Project
Longfellow Hall, Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138
617/495-9108
617/495-8594 FAX

© 1994 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College (Harvard Family Research Project). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of Harvard Family Research Project.

Abstract

As recent trends in education reform and research stress the importance of school-home partnerships, teachers will need preparation for working successfully with parents and other family members. This paper examines teacher preparation in parent involvement for early childhood and K-12 teachers. Surveys of state certification requirements and preservice teacher education programs were conducted to describe the content of parent involvement requirements and training opportunities. Findings show that a majority of states do not mention parent involvement in teacher certification requirements. States with requirements often define parent involvement in vague terms. Likewise, most teacher education programs do not offer substantial parent involvement training. Training that exists is often traditional in definition, teaching methods, and delivery. A typology specifying different components of parent involvement training is also presented. Model programs teaching multiple types of parent involvement, and utilizing collaboration and other innovative approaches are described. Recommendations for improving teacher preparation in parent involvement are offered.

Preparing Teachers to Involve Parents: A National Survey of Teacher Education Programs

Introduction

Parent involvement[1] in schools has become an important goal of educational change as evidenced by the parental participation goal in the GOALS 2000: Educate America Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1994, p. 4). The importance of involving parents in their children's education has long been recognized (Safran, 1974). Research has shown that when parents are involved in schools, children achieve more academically (Epstein, 1986; Henderson, 1987; Bempechat, 1990), parents become empowered (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Cochran, 1987; Epstein, 1986), teacher attitudes improve (Ensle, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1987; Epstein, 1992), and school and community environments improve (Chapman, 1991; National Task Force on School Readiness, 1991).

Changing Roles for Parents, Teachers, and Schools

Parent involvement practices vary depending on the community, the school, and the relationship between them. Traditionally, parents have provided children with support, supervision, and instruction at home; communicated with the school; attended school events and parent-teacher conferences; and volunteered in the classroom (Epstein, 1986; Swap, 1990). In these ways, parents act mainly as school supporters; they have minimal power and receive little support from the school. Recently, parent involvement practice has expanded to include participation in school planning and governance, and in parent education programs (Murphy, 1991). This reflects the recent trend toward

more interactive forms of parent involvement, in which parents are both school decision makers and recipients of school-sponsored services.

Educational reform has contributed to the expanded definition of parent involvement, as have federal and state legislation, by emphasizing the importance of the expanding roles of teachers and parents. For example, the Improving America's Schools Act of 1993 states that "Schools must see it as part of their job to supply [information] and to assist all parents in becoming partners in their children's education. Both schools and parents must be encouraged to reach out to each other, for the sake of children" (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, Introduction, p. 3). The Massachusetts School Improvement Act mandates that every public school in the state form a school council with an equal number of parents and teachers (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1993). Minnesota and Missouri have also initiated statewide, school-based programs that provide parenting and literacy education to parents of young children (Harvard Family Research Project, 1992).

As a result of these national and state influences, school and teacher roles are now more likely to include the nonacademic needs of children and families. In some districts, schools are becoming community resource centers by either housing or directly providing health clinics, child care, and parenting programs (Harvard Family Research Project, 1993; Center for the Future of Children, 1992). Similarly, it is not uncommon for teachers to refer students and their families to health or social service agencies when outside factors inhibit learning in the classroom. In this way, schools are becoming less

isolated and more integrated into the community. This trend suggests the need for school personnel to develop new skills and attitudes for effectively working with parents, social service agencies, and the larger community.

Current Barriers to Effective Parent Involvement

Despite evidence of the positive effects of parent involvement, its potential is still largely ignored in schools. Teachers do *not* systematically encourage parent involvement, and parents do not always participate when they *are* encouraged to do so. This is especially true at secondary levels (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1984), where parent involvement is more limited than at early childhood or elementary levels.

There are several major barriers to parent involvement in public schools. First, school environments may discourage parent involvement, ". . . due to lack of adequate time and training of teachers and administrators and a predominant institutional culture in the schools that places little value on the views and participation of parents" (National Task Force on School Readiness, 1991, p. 24). The traditional philosophy held by many public schools and teachers focuses largely on the needs of children, with little regard for their family life and circumstances; this may contribute to lower levels of parent involvement (Burton, 1992). In addition, large classes and lack of administrator support (Swick & McKnight, 1989) may inhibit parent involvement.

Second, not all types of parent involvement are equally acceptable to both parents and teachers (Krasnow, 1990). Teachers and administrators often are more comfortable with traditional parent involvement activities, such as having parents support school

programs and attend school meetings, while parents are often interested in advocacy and decision making (Chavkin & Williams, 1985). These different expectations can further inhibit strong home-school partnerships.

A third barrier is the negative attitude toward parent involvement commonly held by both teachers and parents. Teachers often believe that parents are neither interested nor qualified to participate in their children's education (New Futures Institute, 1989). Parents, in turn, sometimes feel intimidated by schools and unable to help educate their children (Moles & Safran, 1980). Teachers can be intimidated by the prospect of working closely with families, especially if they have not had experience doing so. For example, Epstein & Becker (1982) found that although teachers thought that parent involvement would improve student achievement, they had reservations about whether they could motivate parents to become more involved.

Fourth, changing demographics and employment patterns may further complicate the development of strong home-school partnerships (Ascher, 1988; Krasnow, 1990; Marburger, 1990). As the student population becomes more ethnically diverse, it is more likely that teachers and parents will come from different cultural and economic backgrounds (Murphy, 1991). In addition, dual-worker families have less time to spend on school involvement, and teachers' many responsibilities may limit their availability outside of class (Swap, 1990).

Finally, a lack of teacher preparation raises another barrier to effective parent involvement. Clearly, teachers need concrete skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes

about parent involvement in order to carry it out effectively (Burton, 1992; Safran, 1974; Edwards & Jones Young, 1992; Davies, 1991). Yet, research has shown that preservice teacher education programs often do not adequately prepare teachers to involve parents (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Houston & Williamson, 1990; Scott-Jones & Epstein, 1988).

Teacher Preparation in Parent Involvement

> The future of school and family partnerships rests on improving teacher and administrator education and training . . . Needed are designs and evaluations of alternative approaches in preservice, in-service, advanced education, and experience in practice teaching, internships, and other forms [of teacher and administrator education] (Epstein, 1992, p. 1147).

Specialized teacher education in parent involvement is one method of reducing the barriers to strong home-school partnerships (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986; Moles, 1987; Safran, 1974). Because most teachers become certified through approved teacher education programs (Roth & Pipho, 1990), such programs hold special potential for providing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to increase parent involvement.

Despite the potential benefit that teacher education programs hold for increasing the level of parent involvement in schools, there is little preservice preparation in parent involvement, at least for elementary level teachers (Chavkin & Williams, 1988). In a study by Houston and Williamson (1990), beginning elementary teachers identified training in conferencing skills and relations and communication with parents as either inadequately covered or completely missing from their preservice education. Other

surveys have also shown that teachers feel they need more instruction in how to work with parents (Bartell, 1992; McAfee, 1987).

This paper expands upon previous research on preservice parent involvement training. Specifically, our purpose was to document the extent to which preservice teacher education currently includes parent involvement at two levels: early childhood and K-12[2]; to examine the current content and method of this education; and to explore planned changes in this education over the next five years.

Method

Teacher Certification

Almost all states develop teacher certification requirements and program approval standards and require graduation from a state-approved program for teaching certification (Clark & McNergney, 1990). Therefore, we reviewed teacher certification materials[3] from 51 state departments of education (including the District of Columbia) to document parent involvement language in early childhood and K-12 certification.[4]

We selected at least two teacher education programs from the 22 states that mentioned parent involvement in their certification requirements,[5] asked them to designate an appropriate faculty respondent, and mailed surveys to those respondents. Then we contacted these programs by telephone. Repeated follow-up phone calls to faculty respondents resulted in a final sample of 58 teacher education programs (25 early childhood and 33 K-12); a response rate of 96.7%.

Survey of Teacher Education Programs

Our initial working definition of parent involvement was derived from existing parent involvement typologies (Epstein, 1992; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). These typologies were used to construct a list of parent involvement activities for our survey.

The survey of teacher education programs was designed to collect information for 1991-92 academic year on: general program information; how the program met state parent involvement requirements; how parent involvement was addressed in coursework, workshops, seminars, student teaching, and field experiences; and current plans to increase, maintain, or decrease the level of parent involvement training over the next five years. We summarized the types of parent involvement training, their methods, and their locations. We conducted t-tests to determine if there were significant differences between early childhood and K-12 programs on the amount, types, and methods of preservice parent involvement training. Finally, we performed a content analysis on responses to open-ended questions about program plans for parent involvement training over the next five years.

Case Studies and Model Programs

In the course of collecting certification materials, we also identified three states -- New York, Utah, and Wisconsin -- that were undergoing major certification changes, including changes in parent involvement training requirements. Key informants from these states were interviewed by telephone about the process and goals of their certification changes.

Finally, after reviewing and analyzing survey data, we selected five teacher education programs from the sample with the strongest parent involvement training to serve as model programs. Four dimensions were used to select these programs:

- quantity -- the number of courses directly addressing parent involvement
- breadth -- the variety of parent involvement types taught
- experiential learning opportunities -- the degree to which teaching methods were interactive and/or experiential (i.e. direct work with parents or in the community, case method, role play)
- integration -- infusion of the parent involvement theme into the curriculum

Results

Teacher Certification

First, our analysis of state teacher certification requirements revealed that many states do *not* mention working with parents or families; those that do rarely define parent involvement in clear, precise terms; phrases such as "parent involvement," "home-school relations," or "working with parents" often appear with no further explanation. Of the 22 states that *do* mention parent involvement in certification requirements, 8 states mention parent involvement for both early childhood and K-12 certification, 5 states mention it for early childhood certification only, and 9 states mention parent involvement for K-12 certification only (early childhood, n=13; K-12, n=17).[6] Only teacher education programs from these states are included in our results on training opportunities.

Case studies of three states reveal innovative and comprehensive certification changes regarding parent involvement. In New York, recent certification changes have coincided with certification test revisions, site-based management legislation, and a state-level parent partnership office, presenting a comprehensive effort at the state level to expand the participation of parents in schools.

In Utah, the state Office of Education and the state PTA collaborated with university deans and faculty to assess and discuss options for teacher education in parent involvement. Instead of mandating new certification requirements, the effort has been voluntary on the part of teacher education deans and state education officials. The effort also has been unique in its collaboration with a parent involvement organization.

In Wisconsin, certification changes have benefitted from the momentum of a statewide parent involvement campaign and are accompanied by a state collection of parent involvement reference materials for university teacher educators who must now add parent involvement training to their curricula. We plan to conduct a follow-up study of these innovative state developments.

Revised Framework of Parent Involvement

After reviewing certification and survey data, we expanded our initial framework of parent involvement to encompass two broader categories (General Parent Involvement and General Family Knowledge) and modified it to reflect a teacher education perspective. Because of this perspective, our framework (Table 1) focuses on the *attitudes*, *skills*, and *knowledge* teachers need to implement successful parent involvement.

This is in contrast to other parent involvement typologies, such as Joyce Epstein's (1992), which are derived from school practices and focus on actual *types* of parent involvement carried out in schools. For example, "General Family Knowledge" in our framework, is not a *type* of parent involvement per se, but an area of *knowledge* that teachers may need to work effectively with parents.

We used this revised framework as a tool to compare certification, teacher education program curriculum, and other standards mentioning parent involvement (e.g., the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, and National Association for the Education of Young Children).[7] The framework also begins to lay out the areas of knowledge needed to prepare teachers for cultivating strong relationships with parents. In doing so, the framework integrates two of the most recent National Education Goals, namely, "Teacher Education and Professional Development," and "Parental Participation" (GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, 1994). Table 1 lists the types of parent involvement training in our expanded framework, along with goals and specific examples for each.

Table 1

Parent Involvement Framework for Teacher Training

Type	Goals	Examples of Specific Topics from Survey
General Parent Involvement	To provide general information on the goals of, benefits of, and barriers to parent involvement. To promote knowledge of, skills in, and positive attitudes toward involving parents.	* Knowledge of the benefits of parent involvement * Knowledge of teachers' and schools' responsibility to include parents
General Family Knowledge	To promote knowledge of different families' cultural beliefs, childrearing practices, structures, and living environments. To promote an awareness of and respect for different backgrounds and lifestyles.	* Knowledge and understanding of different families * Knowledge of cultural beliefs and values, family structures, living environments, and childrearing practices
Home-School Communication	To provide various techniques and strategies to improve two-way communication between home and school (and/or parent and teacher)	* Skills in parent-teacher conferencing * Skills in other written and oral communication between home and school.
Parent Involvement in Learning Activities	To provide information on how to involve parents in their children's learning outside of the classroom	* Skills to encourage parents to promote learning activities out of school * Skills to encourage parents in monitoring children's school work
Parents and Families Supporting Schools	To provide information on ways to involve parents in helping the school, both within and outside the classroom	* Skills to involve parents as resources; such as class volunteers, tutors, fundraisers, guest speakers, etc.
Schools Supporting Parents and Families	To introduce how schools can support families' social, educational, and social service needs through parent education programs, parent centers, and referrals to other community or social services	* Knowledge of school-based parent education programs * Knowledge and skills to refer families to outside community or social service agencies
Parents and Families as Change Agents	To introduce ways to support and involve parents and families in decision making, action research, child advocacy, parent and teacher training, and development of policy, program and curriculum.	* Skills to co-develop IEPs and IFSPs with parents and families * Knowledge of parent role in site-based management and decision-making * Knowledge of parent organizations

Types of Parent Involvement in State Certification and Teacher Education Programs

Table 2 presents a summary of each type of parent involvement (from Table 1) mentioned in state certification materials and teacher education program curriculum. Our research shows that states mention parent involvement in more general terms than teacher education programs. Also, teacher education programs mention specific types of parent involvement more frequently than states.

Both states and teacher education programs appear to value background knowledge of family characteristics (e.g., childrearing practices, ethnicity) equally. "Home-School Communication" is the specific type mentioned most by both states and teacher education programs. Finally, neither states nor teacher education programs mention "Schools Supporting Parents and Families" frequently.

Table 2

Types of Parent Involvement Mentioned in State Certification Materials and Teacher Education Programs

Type of PI Training	% States (n=30)	% Programs (n=58)
General Parent Involvement	80	22
General Family Knowledge	50	43
Home-School Communication	40	84
Parents Helping Schools	7	64
Parent Involvement in Learning Activities	3	67
School Help for Families	7	22
Governance and Advocacy	3	62

Parent Involvement Curriculum

Table 3 lists types and methods of preservice parent involvement training, as well as where in the curriculum such training is offered. The vast majority of courses addressing parent involvement deal with parent-teacher conferences and parents as teachers. Parent involvement is most frequently addressed in discussion and in required readings. Also, parent involvement training is most often offered as part of a required course and in student teaching.

Table 3

Content of Parent Involvement Curriculum

Types Addressed in Courses	%
Parent-teacher conferences	88
Parent teaching child at home	80
Parent as class volunteer	67
Parent as school decision maker	63
Open house events	43
General parent involvement*	34
Communicating with parents*	23
Understanding parents/families*	21

* "other" responses

Teaching Methods	%
Discussion	92
Required reading	90
Lecture	86
Class assignments	73
Case Method	56
Video/multimedia	55
Optional reading	44
Direct work with parents*	23
Guest speakers*	21
Role play*	10

Where in Curriculum Parent Involvement is Taught	%
Part of a required course	83
Student teaching	63
Full required course	37
Field placement	36
Optional course	30
Seminar	25

Model Programs

In the process of studying teacher education program curriculum, five teacher education programs stood out from the sample as having stronger parent involvement training. Four are early childhood programs, and one is an elementary program. They meet our previously described criteria as follows:

- **quantity** -- all have at least five required courses addressing parent involvement
- **breadth** -- all address at least four types of parent involvement from Table 1
- **experiential learning opportunities** -- three describe interactive and/or experiential methods to teach students about parent involvement (e.g., direct experience with families or communities, role play, case study method)
- **integration** -- all have parent involvement as a theme throughout the curriculum (in required and optional courses, workshops, student teaching, and field experience)

Beyond these similarities, programs vary greatly. They range from a small Catholic college in New England to a large state university in the Midwest, and differ in the types, methods, and instructional modes of parent involvement training offered. For example, in one special education field experience, Anglo student teachers are paired with Navajo teacher aids on a reservation, where they learn about Navajo culture and traditions. We plan to conduct a follow-up study of these five innovative programs.

Early Childhood versus K-12: Certification and Training

An analysis comparing parent involvement language in early childhood and K-12 certification revealed that most parent involvement language occurs in early childhood certification. Likewise, in teacher education programs surveyed, more parent involvement training exists at the early childhood level.

A more detailed comparison of parent involvement training in early childhood and K-12 programs showed statistically significant differences between the two. Early childhood programs have more full required courses addressing parent involvement ($p<0.007$), offer more hours of parent involvement training ($p<0.01$), used "guest speakers" for teaching parent involvement more frequently ($p<0.063$), and have more courses addressing an "understanding of parents" ($p<0.063$) than do K-12 programs.

The quality of parent involvement training also appears to be higher at the early childhood level. This observation is based on an integration of parent involvement theme into the curriculum of early childhood programs, where parent involvement training appears in a variety of courses and field experiences. Also, innovative methods for teaching parent involvement exist in early childhood programs. For example, one early childhood teacher education program has a community service program in which student volunteers provide tutoring, respite care and child care, and learn how to work directly with families.

Plans for Expanding Preservice Parent Involvement Training

Table 4 summarizes: 1) teacher education programs' plans to increase, decrease, or maintain their current levels of parent involvement training over the next five years, 2) teacher education programs' perceived barriers to increasing parent involvement training, and 3) their reasons for increasing parent involvement training. Table 5 shows where, how, and which types of parent involvement training will increase.

Table 4

Planned Changes in Parent Involvement Training

Reasons Not to Increase (n=19)	%	**Reasons to Increase** (n=36)	%
No external pressure	47	Intrinsic Value	
Limited number of courses	42	for students, teachers, parents	47
Satisfaction with current level	26	for society	47
Lack of funding	16	in general	22
Faculty unfamiliarity	5	Extrinsic Forces	
Lack of collaboration between areas	5	Pressure from individuals	42
Newness of the movement	5	External pressure (e.g., mandates)	28
Preservice training ineffective	5	Restructuring	
		curriculum	25
		philosophy, mission	22
		specific program	19
		Research	6
		Multiculturalism	6
		Early Childhood spillover	6

Table 5

Plans for Increasing Parent Involvement Training
(n=36)

Types of Parent Involvement	%
Communication/partnerships with parents	58
Decision making	47
Unspecified parent involvement	25
Parents as resources	22
Parenting and parent education	19
Understanding and working with diversity	17

Where in Curriculum	%	Methods of Teaching	%
Integration into curriculum	50	Multimedia	33
New course/seminar/workshop	42	Discussion	28
Field experience	33	Case studies	25
Interdisciplinary merging	11	Role play	22
No formal plans	11	Observation	19
New program	8	Practicum	19
Multiculturalism	8	Lecture	14
		Reading/resources	14

When asked why they planned to increase parent involvement training, respondents suggested that students, teachers, parents, and the broader community would benefit from increased parent involvement in schools (see Table 4). This finding shows that a positive attitude toward parent involvement exists, and that preservice education is regarded as important in increasing parent involvement (only one program considered preservice education to be ineffective for teaching about parent involvement). Furthermore, respondents seemed particularly sensitive to individual and local needs,

citing pressure from individuals, schools, and personnel as motivating forces for increasing parent involvement training. When asked why they planned *not* to increase parent involvement training, on the other hand, programs often cited the absence of pressure from external groups, such as professional organizations. Some also faulted state departments of education for requiring too much of the curriculum, while restricting the maximum number of course units allowed.

Presently, teacher education programs most often use traditional teaching methods such as discussion, required readings, lecture, and class assignments to teach parent involvement. However, more teacher education programs plan to use nontraditional methods, such as case method, video, and role play, in the next five years. Also, most teacher education programs plan to integrate the parent involvement topic into the curriculum, create a new course on it, or provide opportunities for field experiences with parents.

Discussion

In summary, our findings support earlier studies (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Houston & Williamson, 1990) investigating preservice parent involvement training. An initial look at 51 departments of education found that a majority of states do not mention parent involvement in teacher certification; those that do often defined parent involvement in general or superficial terms. Also, where parent involvement training is included in teacher education programs, it is often traditional in definition, teaching methods, and delivery. Furthermore, there are numerous barriers to increasing parent

involvement training. However, model programs that utilize collaboration and other innovative approaches to teacher training in parent involvement can be identified, particularly in early childhood programs.

Limitations

Our decision to use state certification requirements to select teacher education programs with parent involvement yielded a great deal of information on teacher preparation in parent involvement from a limited number of programs. However, it also limits the generalizations that can be made from our findings. It is likely that other model parent involvement training programs exist, both in other states, and in areas other than preservice education. Future research is needed to study teacher education programs in other states and inservice training programs, since they too can provide valuable information for strengthening home-school partnerships. Also, because our survey was descriptive rather than evaluative in nature, we cannot make conclusions about the effectiveness of the programs surveyed. Therefore, future research should also: systematically evaluate different models of parent involvement training; investigate the effectiveness of participatory methods for providing teachers with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to carry out parent involvement; document how professional development schools are preparing teachers to involve parents; and examine which locations (or combination of locations) within preservice training are most effective for delivering parent involvement.

Recommendations

Overall, parent involvement is not a high priority in state certification or teacher education programs. To respond to recent trends in reform movements and school practice, both could emphasize parent involvement more. To do this, we recommend the following approaches:

1. Clarify the Definition of Parent Involvement. States that currently mention parent involvement do so in very general terms. This may be an effort to provide a placeholder for parent involvement in preservice curriculum, leaving the specifics of training up to teacher education programs. However, a clearer definition set forth by the state might better promote parent involvement training for teachers, while still allowing teacher education programs flexibility in how, where, and when to teach parent involvement.

2. Expand the Definition of Parent Involvement. State departments of education and teacher education programs could also encompass a more comprehensive definition of parent involvement, in which schools and families are equally valued as resources in children's learning. Despite current trends, most states and teacher education programs still emphasize the traditional parent-teacher conference over contemporary parent involvement activities. Though parent-teacher conferences are important, schools and teachers must recognize that families often need additional assistance and encouragement to help their children in school. Such assistance ranges from how parents can help their children with particular homework assignments, to basic parenting education classes or more extensive family support services. Evidence suggests that such

assistance may be essential for many minority and low-income parents, for whom school involvement is an intimidating and difficult proposition (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). In order for this type of parent involvement to take place, however, teachers and schools must recognize the intrinsic worth of families as contributors to children's learning, and be willing to go beyond traditional roles of parents and schools.

3. Use Innovative Methods to Teach Parent Involvement. Our findings show that parent involvement training is rarely interactive, depending mostly on lectures, readings, and other traditional teaching methods. More didactic and experiential methods to teach parent involvement might be beneficial. Several of our model programs are using direct work with parents, role play, and case method to teach parent involvement. Also, more programs plan to use these and other nontraditional methods in the next five years. These plans align with the recommendations of several beginning teachers in Houston and Williamson's study (1990), who advised the inclusion of an interactive method -- simulated parent-teacher conferences -- as part of preservice preparation.

4. Expand Delivery of Training. Within teacher education programs, questions about where parent involvement training should be delivered must be answered. Presently, parent involvement is addressed most often as part of a course or in student teaching. Which locations or combinations of locations are most effective for delivering preservice training? Current research suggests that parent involvement in schools is most effective when it occurs over an extended period and is pursued through several different activities (Henderson, 1987). Similarly, parent involvement training may need to be

taught more gradually, addressed in several ways, and more integrated into curricula. For example, several respondents from our survey plan to integrate parent involvement into their curricula over the next five years rather than create a new course. Also, Burton (1992) suggests family-related training that is addressed through coursework in conjunction with active participation in field settings.

5. Look to National Standards for Guidance. An absence of pressure from external groups, such as professional organizations, is a common barrier to increasing parent involvement training in teacher education programs This implies that if these organizations made parent involvement a priority, teacher education programs would respond in kind. After our survey was conducted, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1993), NCATE (Richardson, 1994), and GOALS 2000 legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) added parent involvement to their guidelines. They now offer more expansive definitions of parent involvement and what teachers and programs will need to meet their requirements. It will be interesting to observe the impact of these revisions on teacher education programs.

6. Create a Specialization or Faculty Position. Teacher education programs also fault state departments of education for requiring too much of teacher education programs, yet restricting the maximum number of course units allowed. The overload of demands mentioned by teacher education programs is similar to the overload of responsibilities experienced by many teachers, who find their attempts to involve parents hindered by

other teaching demands (Cohen & Ooms, 1993; Education Commission of States, 1988, cited in The New Futures Institute, 1989, p.16). Because of these demands, parent involvement and parent involvement training are often viewed as low priority issues in public schools and in university teaching programs, regardless of the potential benefits (Krasnow, 1990). One way to overcome the state limitations on coursework is to integrate the parent involvement theme throughout the curricula, rather than adding additional courses. Another strategy is to create a special focus or endorsement in home-school partnerships, and/or designate a faculty position in the area.

7. Collaborate. Collaboration is another promising strategy that can be used to improve the quality and quantity of parent involvement training. Reform efforts at state and university levels include collaborations across teaching subspecialties, such as early childhood and special education; collaboration with other professional schools, such as social work and public health; and collaboration with professional organizations, such as NCATE and the National PTA.

First, certain teacher education subspecialties may be a rich source of information for other teacher education programs that wish to improve parent involvement training. For example, early childhood programs emphasize parent involvement training more than elementary or secondary programs. Also, special education may already have successful programs and strategies for teaching about parent involvement.

Second, collaboration with fields of health and social services is considered an effective approach to preparing teachers for their expanded roles in parent involvement

(Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992). At one southern university, for example, social work and education students live in housing projects located in communities they may eventually serve (Bradley, 1991).

Third, school-university collaborations, such as professional development schools, can help bridge the gap between theory and practice. They may be ideally suited to implement and evaluate methods and types of parent involvement training.

Finally, collaborations between organizations, such as that between the Utah Department of Education and the state PTA, should be considered.

8. Increase Parent Involvement Training for Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers. Results of this study demonstrate that early childhood educators receive more preservice training than elementary, middle, and high school teachers. This coincides with findings that parent involvement in schools declines dramatically with each passing grade, especially in the middle grades and in high school (e.g., Epstein, 1992; Epstein, 1986; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). This is unfortunate given that parent involvement continues to have a positive impact on student achievement at elementary (Epstein, 1987; Epstein, 1991) *and* secondary levels (Keith, Reimers, Fehramm, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986, in Bempechat, 1990). Across the board -- in certification, teacher education programs, and schools -- parent involvement declines as grade levels increase. Teacher education programs should consider providing more training in this area for all preservice teachers.

9. Expand Delivery Beyond Preservice Education. Because preservice teacher education programs are already overwhelmed by reform efforts, other educational settings for delivering parent involvement training, such as inservice training opportunities, deserve study as well. The induction year in particular, may be an important target point for teaching parent involvement. According to one study (Langan, 1989), teachers show a dramatic drop in positive attitudes toward teaching as they enter the workforce and find themselves unprepared to teach. Beginning teachers in Houston and Williamson's study (1990), felt unprepared to encourage parent involvement; this lack of preparation in parent involvement may add to the overall negative attitudes of first-year teachers (Swick & McKnight, 1989).

10. Look to Model Approaches. We have identified state departments of education and teacher education programs that already incorporate some of the above recommendations in their efforts to increase parent involvement training. They prove that parent involvement can be made a priority despite the barriers. These efforts should be further documented and evaluated to provide model approaches to other states and teacher education programs. Also, much can be gained from the expertise of other fields, and teacher education programs should consider various forms of collaboration when improving parent involvement training.

* * * * * *

In summary, many viable options are available for improving the capacity of teachers to involve parents. As parent involvement becomes a greater priority in

education reform and public schools, state departments of education and teacher education programs can respond to the need for training in a variety of ways. While there is much room for improvement in this area, examples of model approaches to increasing parent involvement training do exist. We hope that others will follow their example in promoting strong home-school partnerships.

Endnotes

1. Different terms have been used to describe home-school-community partnerships. In this paper we use the terms "parent involvement," "family involvement," "parental participation," and "school-home partnerships" depending on the context. We define our concept broadly to encompass a range of activities and participants involved in home-school-community partnerships. For example, we recognize that involvement by parents is not enough, rather, a partnership among the various stakeholders in children's education is needed.

2. Though we reviewed K-12 certification requirements and programs, virtually all parent involvement requirements and training occurred at the elementary level (K-6).

3. Materials included small brochures, excerpts from state department of education publications, handbooks, and lengthy notebooks describing guidelines and competencies for teachers and teacher education programs.

4. In state certification language, early childhood refers to pre-kindergarten and elementary/secondary refers to grades K-12. However, only two states included PI certification language for grades 9-12.

5. Teacher education programs were selected based on the following criteria: 1) status as state-approved undergraduate programs that prepare early childhood teachers and/or elementary and secondary teachers as listed in the *NASDTEC Manual* (1991), 2) those granting the largest number of bachelor's degrees in education in 1991, as listed by the National Center for Education Statistics, and 3) willingness to participate in the study.

6. Our sample may have excluded states that sent incomplete information and states in the process of revising their certification language. The sample did not include states with language that did not match our criteria (optional coursework, special education requirements, or simple mentions of parents or families).

7. Two researchers coded these materials, compared results, and resolved any discrepancies (85% agreement).

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Heather B. Weiss for her guidance and vision throughout this project; Erika Kates for her critical and ongoing feedback; Katherine K. Merseth and Tom Schultz for sharing their expertise and insight; Julia Van for research and editorial assistance; Elena Lopez, Tamara Beauboeuf, Scott Andrew, and Alejandra Carvajal for their helpful comments on the manuscript.

We also thank the informants we interviewed and surveyed from state departments of education and teacher education programs. Our research was made possible through the generous support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

References

Ascher, C. (1988). Improving the school-home connection for poor and minority urban students. The Urban Review, 20(2), 109-122.

Bacharach, S. B. (1990). Education reform: Making sense of it all. In S. B. Bacharach (Ed.), Education reform: Making sense of it all (pp. 1-6). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Becker, H. J., & Epstein, J. L. (1982). Parent involvement: A survey of teacher practices. The Elementary School Journal, 83, 85-102.

Bempechat, J. (1990). The role of parent involvement in children's academic learning: A review of the literature. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

Berger, E. H. (1991). Parent involvement: Yesterday and today. The Elementary School Journal, 91, 209-219.

Bradley, A. (1991, March 13). Teacher trainees at black university to move into public-housing project. Education Week, p. 10.

Bucci, J. A., & Reitzammer, A. F. (1992). Collaboration with health and social service professionals: Preparing teachers for new roles. Journal of Teacher Education, 43(4), 290-295.

Burton, C. B. (1992). Defining family-centered early education: Beliefs of public school, child care, and Head Start teachers. Early Childhood Education and Development, 3(1), 45-59.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (1987). A classification of institutions of higher education. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Center for the Future of Children. (1992). The Future of Children, 2(1).

Chapman, W. (1991). The Illinois experience: State grants to improve schools through parent involvement. Phi Delta Kappan, 72(5) 355-358.

Chavkin, N. F., & Williams, D. L. (1985). Parent involvement in education. Final report, December 1984-November 1985. Austin, TX: Southwest Education Development Laboratory.

Chavkin, N. F., & Williams, D. L. (1988). Critical issues in teacher training for parent involvement. Educational Horizons, 66, 86-89.

Clark, D. L., & McNergney, R. F. (1990). Governance of teacher education. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), Handbook of research on teacher education (pp. 101-118). New York: MacMillan Publishing Co.

Cochran, M. (1987). The parental empowerment process: Building on family strengths. Equity & Choice, 4(1), 9-23.

Cochran, M., & Dean, C. (1991). Home-school relations and the empowerment process. The Elementary School Journal, 91(3), 261-269.

Davies, D. (1991). Schools reaching out: Family, school, and community partnerships for student success. Phi Delta Kappan, 72(5), 376-382.

Edwards, P. A., & Jones Young, L. S. (1992). Beyond parents: Famiy, community, and school involvement. Phi Delta Kappan, 74(1), 72-80.

Ensle, A. (1992). A study of current trends in parental involvement programs for parents of limited English proficient children in the Houston-Galveston area. In A. Ensle (Ed.), Critical Issues in Parental Involvement. Houston, TX: UHCL Research Center for Language and Culture.

Epstein, J. L. (1984). School policy and parent involvement: Research results. Educational Horizons, 62, 70-72.

Epstein, J. L. (1986). Parents' reactions to teacher practices of parent involvement. The Elementary School Journal, 86, 277-294.

Epstein, J. L. (1987). Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement. In K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufmann, & F. Losel (Eds.), Social intervention: Potential and constraints. New York: W. de Gruyer.

Epstein, J. L. (1991). Effects on student achievement of teachers' practices of parent involvement. Advances in Resding/Language Research, 5, 261-276.

Epstein, J. L. (1992). School and Family Partnerships. In M. Alkin (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research, (6th ed.). New York: MacMillan.

Goodlad, J. I., Soder, R., & Sirotnik, K. A. (Eds.). (1990). Places where teachers are taught. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Greenwood, G., & Hickman, C. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. The Elementary School Journal, 91(3), 279-288.

Griffin, G. A. (1992). Teacher education. In M.C. Alkin (Ed.), Encyclopedia of educational research (6th ed.) (pp. 1333-1345). New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Harvard Family Research Project. (1993). Paths to school readiness: An in-depth look at three early childhood programs. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Harvard Family Research Project. (1992). Pioneering States: Innovative family support and education programs. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Henderson, A. (Ed.). (1987). The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A., Marburger, C., & Ooms, T. (1986). Beyond the bake sale. Columbus, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Hoover-Dempsey, D.V., Bassler, O.C., & Brissie, J. (1987). Parent involvement: Contributions of teacher efficacy, school socioeconomic status and other school characteristics. American Educational Research Journal, 24.

Houston, W. R., & Williamson, J. L. (1990). Perceptions of their preparation by 42 Texas elementary school teachers compared with their responses as student teachers. Houston, TX: Texas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Kapel, D. E., Gifford, L. S., & Kapel, M. B. (1991). American educators' encyclopedia (rev. ed.). New York: Greenwood Press.

Krasnow, J. H. (1990). Improving family-school relationships: Teacher research from the Schools Reaching Out project. Boston, MA: Institute for Responsive Education.

Langan, J. (1989). In Nebraska Consortium, Monograph #2.

Marburger, C. L. (1990). The school site level: Involving parents in reform. In S. B. Bacharach (Ed.), Education reform: Making sense of it all (pp. 82-91). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Massachusetts Department of Education. (1993). Massachusetts Education Reform Act: Questions and Answers on School Councils. Malden, MA: Author.

McAfee, O. (1987). Improving home-school relations: Implications for staff development. Education and Urban Society, 19(2).

Metz, M. H. (1990). Hidden assumptions preventing real reform: Some missing elements in the educational reform movement. In S. B. Bacharach (Ed.), Education reform: Making sense of it all (pp. 141-154). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Moles, O., & Safran, D. (Eds.). (1980). Home-school alliances: Approaches to increasing parent involvement in children's learning in upper elementary and junior high schools (grades 4-9).

Moles, O. C. (1987). Who wants parents involvement? Interests, skills, and opportunities among parents and educators. Education and Urban Society, 19, 137-145.

Murphy, J. (1991). Restructuring schools: Capturing and assessing the phenomenon. New York: Teachers College Press.

National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. (1991). The NASDTEC manual 1991: Manual on certification and preparation of educational personnel in the United States. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Task Force on School Readiness. (1991). Caring communities: Supporting young children and families. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education.

New Futures Institute. (1989). Resource guide series: Vol. 1. Parent involvement in new futures. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Center for Human Resources.

Nicolau, S. & Ramos, C. L. (1990). Together is better: Building Strong Relationships Between Schools and Hispanic Parents. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 325 543).

Passow, H. (1990). How it happened, wave by wave: Whither (or wither?) school reform? In S.B. Bacharach (Ed.), Education reform: Making sense of it all (pp. 10-19). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Pipho, C. (1986). States move closer to reality. Phi Delta Kappan, 68, 1-8.

Roth, R. A., & Pipho, C. (1990). Teacher education standards. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), Handbook of research on teacher education (pp. 119-135). New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Safran, D. (1974). Preparing teachers for parent involvement. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Parent Involvement.

Swap, S. M. (1990). Parent involvement and success for all children: What we know now. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.

Swick, K. J., & McKnight, S. (1989). Characteristics of kindergarten teachers who promote parent involvement. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4, 19-29.

Sykes, G. (1992). Teacher licensure and certification. In M. C. Alkin (Ed.), Encyclopedia of educational research (6th ed.) (pp. 1352-1359). New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

U.S. Department of Education. (1994). Goals 2000: National Education Goals. Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education. (1993, September 13). Improving America's Schools Act of 1993: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Amendments to Other Acts. Washington, DC: Author.

Warner, I. (1991). Parents in touch: District leadership for parent involvement. Phi Delta Kappan. 72(5), 372-75.

Williams, D.L. (1992). Parental involvement in teacher preparation: Challenges to teacher education. In L. Kaplan (Ed.), Education and the Family (pp. 243-254).